



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Tahoe
National
Forest

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File Code: 1950

Date: April 19, 2018

Subject: Squaw Valley/ Alpine Meadows Base-to-Base Gondola Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report Available for Public Review and Comment

Dear Stakeholder:

The U.S. Forest Service and Placer County have prepared a joint Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) to analyze and disclose the environmental impacts expected to result from the potential construction and operation of a gondola connecting the Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows base areas. This document meets the requirements of both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows are separate ski facilities, which are both under ownership of and operated by the project proponent, Squaw Valley Ski Holdings (SVSH). In 2015, the Tahoe National Forest (TNF) and Placer County accepted applications from SVSH for the Squaw Valley/ Alpine Meadows Base-to-Base Gondola Project. With this proposal, SVSH proposes to install and operate a gondola interconnecting the Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows base areas, and install eight Gazex exploders (avalanche control devices) at Alpine Meadows.

Four alternatives are analyzed in the Draft EIS/EIR, including a no-action alternative and three action alternatives, which would result in the installation of a base-to-base gondola under different alignments, and the installation of Gazex exploders at Alpine Meadows. The no-action alternative provides a baseline for comparing the effects of the action alternatives, and would reflect a continuation of existing conditions without changes, additions, or upgrades. With implementation of any of the action alternatives, the base-to-base gondola would range from 11,700 feet to 13,000 feet in length, require 33-35 lift towers, two base terminals, and two intermediate mid-stations.

The gondola would begin on privately owned land at Squaw Valley, traverse the privately owned Caldwell property, and would terminate within the Alpine Meadows base area on National Forest System lands, which are operated under Forest Service Special Use Permit. Construction would occur over a period of approximately 6-8 months, including some helicopter usage for placement of towers, and approximately 30-40 workers will be on the project site during peak construction periods. The total disturbance, including temporary and permanent ground disturbance, temporary construction disturbance, and over-story vegetation removal, would range from approximately 14.73 acres to 19.87 acres. Resource Protection Measures (RPMs) and mitigation measures are incorporated into all action alternatives to minimize potential environmental impacts from construction and operation of the project.



Implementation of the proposal would require an amendment to the existing Forest Service Special Use Permit, issued for the operation and maintenance of Alpine Meadows. The proposal is consistent with the Alpine Meadows Ski Area Master Development Plan and passed the screening criteria for consideration to use National Forest System (NFS) lands. Passing screening will allow for amendment to the existing permit, which is consistent with Forest Service land use regulations. Permitting from Placer County would include a conditional use permit, a re-zone to accommodate the Alpine Meadows base terminal, and an amendment to the Squaw Valley General Plan and Land Use Ordinance, which would allow for a new ski lift.

Details on where to review the Draft EIS/EIR and how to comment on the project are included below. Please refer to the Draft EIS/EIR for detailed information on the project. The Draft EIS/EIR is available for review by the public during normal business hours at the following locations:

- Tahoe City Library (740 N. Lake Boulevard, Tahoe City, CA 96145)
- Truckee Library (10031 Levon Avenue, Truckee, CA 96161)
- Placer County (3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190, Auburn, CA 95603)
- Placer County (775 N. Lake Boulevard, Tahoe City, CA 96145)
- Tahoe National Forest Supervisor's Office (631 Coyote Street, Nevada City, CA 95959)
- Tahoe National Forest Truckee Ranger District
(10811 Stockrest Springs Road, Truckee, CA 96161)

The Draft EIS/EIR is also available online at:

- <https://www.squawalpinegondola-eis.com/library/documents>
- <https://www.placer.ca.gov/departments/communitydevelopment/envcoordsvcs/eir/squawvalleygondolaproject>

Send written comments to one of the following locations:

- U.S. Forest Service, Tahoe National Forest, Truckee Ranger District
c/o NEPA Contractor
P.O. Box 2729
Frisco, CO 80443
Email: Comments@squawalpinegondola-eis.com
- Placer County Community Development Resources Agency
3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190
Auburn, CA 95603
Attention: Shirlee Herrington, Environmental Coordination Services
Email: cdraecs@placer.ca.gov

All comments received by Placer County during the 45-day public comment period will be shared with the U.S. Forest Service and responded to in the Final EIS/EIR, and vice versa.

Pursuant to 36 CFR 218.25, comments on the Squaw Valley/ Alpine Meadows Base-to-Base Gondola Project Draft EIS/EIR will be accepted for 45 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the Notice of Availability of this document in the Federal Register.

The Notice of Availability for the Squaw Valley/ Alpine Meadows Base-to-Base Gondola Project Draft EIS/EIR is scheduled to be published in the Federal Register on April 27, 2018. If the comment period ends on a Saturday, Sunday or federal holiday, comments will be accepted until the end of the next federal working day. The publication date of the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this proposal. You should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Only individuals or entities (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) who submit timely and specific written comments about this proposed project during this or another public comment period established by the Responsible Official will be eligible to file an objection. Comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider (36 CFR 218.2). Other eligibility requirements are defined by 36 CFR 218.25 (a) (3) and include name, postal address, title of the project, signature or other verification of identity upon request, and the identity of the individual or entity who authored the comments. Individual members of an entity must submit their own individual comments in order to have eligibility for objecting as an individual. A timely submission will be determined, as outlined in 36 CFR 218.25 (a) (4). It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure timely receipt of any comments submitted.

Information received in response to this solicitation, including names, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, the agency will not be able to provide subsequent documents to people who submit comments anonymously, and they will not have standing to file an objection. It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure timely receipt of any comments submitted.

Several public meetings on the Draft EIS/EIR are planned to be conducted during the public comment period, including the following:

- Forest Service Open House
Tuesday, May 22, 2018 from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Truckee Ranger District Office, 10811 Stockrest Springs Road, Truckee CA, 96161
- Placer County Planning Commission Meeting
Thursday, May 24, 2018, at 10:00 a.m.
North Tahoe Events Center, 8318 North Lake Boulevard, Kings Beach, CA

The U.S. Forest Service's Open House dates are intended to be informational to the public. Maps and printed copies of the Draft EIS/EIR will be available. The public may ask questions; however, formal public comments will only be recorded at the May 24 Planning Commission

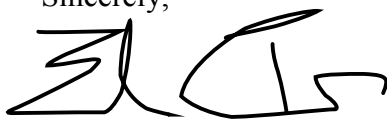
Meeting.

The Placer County Planning Commission meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m.; however, the proposed project may not be discussed at this exact time. Please refer to the meeting agenda at the following link:

<http://www.placer.ca.gov/departments/communitydevelopment/planning/pchearings>

This link may be used up to one week prior to the meeting for updated information. At this public hearing, a presentation about the project will be provided and the public will have an opportunity to speak. Formal public comments will be recorded at this Planning Commission Meeting on May 24, 2018.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ELI ILANO', with a stylized, cursive-like script.

ELI ILANO
Forest Supervisor

Cc: Joanne Roubique, Joe Flannery, Karie Wiltshire